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Kids to Take Over National Parks

First National Junior Ranger Day Announced

WASHINGTON, DC – Children can take part in free, fun-filled activities during the first National Junior Ranger Day on Saturday, April 28, 2007. More than 100 National Park Service sites throughout the country will host a wide variety of events encouraging families to explore, learn about, and protect their national parks. A complete list of activities is posted on-line at www.nps.gov/npweek.



“Every National Park Service site has an important story to share,” said National Park Service Director Mary A. Bomar. “The living history programs, games, walks, demonstrations, and other special events planned for Junior Ranger Day will bring the parks to life for our youngest visitors. In addition to having fun and gaining knowledge, every child will receive a free certificate, patch, or pin for participating.”

Sarah Watts from North Carolina has earned Junior Ranger certificates from 69 different National Park Service sites over the past ten years. “The Junior Ranger program makes learning about the national parks fun,” said Watts. “I climbed the fiery furnace at Arches, felt the cool air of the blowhole at Wupatki, rode a mule into Bryce Canyon, and counted 133 alligators on a bike ride in the Everglades. I have discovered so much about the parks that I hope someday to work as a park ranger.”

National Junior Ranger Day is part of this year’s commemoration of National Park Week. The theme for National Park Week 2007 is *Your National Parks: Explore, Learn, Protect*. Children who cannot visit a park in person are invited to take part in “WebRangers” activities at www.nps.gov/webrangers. Kids who complete a National Park Week scavenger hunt between April 22 and 28 will earn a special certificate. On WebRangers, kids can explore more than 40 activities, view park webcams, and share their park stories and pictures.

Financial assistance for the Junior Ranger program has been furnished by the National Park Foundation, the national charitable partner of the National Park Service. In addition, the Foundation is sponsoring an essay contest for elementary school students on the importance of national parks. National Park Foundation President and CEO Vin Cipolla said, “We are proud to support the Junior Ranger program. It is an important part of our nationwide effort to connect children to America’s heritage so that they can develop the sense of pride and ownership necessary to be the future stewards of these magnificent places.”

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